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1971/03/19

DECLASSIFIED
Authority E.O. 12958
By CM NARA Date 9/5/02

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T O P S E C R E T SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR ADM MOORER AND
ADM MCCAIN FROM GEN ABRAMS. DELIVER IMMEDIATELY.
1. AMB BUNKER, BG HAIG, AND I MET WITH PRESIDENT THIEU FOR
ABOUT ONE AND HALFT HOURS AT 1730 HOURS, 19 AMRCH 1971 (LOCAL).
2. PRESIDENT THIEU, IN DISCUSSING LAM SON 719, SAID THAT IT HAD
BEEN NECESSARY TO CHANGE THE PLAN MANY TIMES. THIS WAS BROUGHT
ON IN PART BY THE NUMBER OF ENEMY TROOPS WHICH ULTIMATELY WERE EM-
PLOYED WHICH EXCEED THEIR ESTIMATES. THE RATE OF ARVN CASULATIES
WAS ALSO GREATER THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED. IN FACING THIS
PROGLEM, IT BECAME NECESSARY TO WORK OUT SOME SYSTEM OF
ROTATING TROOPS AMONG THOSE WHICH ARE AVAILALBE. WHAT PRESIDENT
THIEU HAS DIRECTED TO BE DONE AT THIS POINT IS THE ORDERLY AND
CAREFUL WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES FROM LAOS BACK IN TO SOUTH VIETNAM.
HE FEELS THAT THIS PROCESS SHOULD TAKE UNTIL ABOUT 5 OR 8 APRIL.
TOWARD THE END OF THIS PERIOD, HE WANTS TO EXECUTE A RAID AGAINST
MUONG NONG. HE VISUALIZES THIS RAID BEING MADE WITH POWERFUL
AIR SUPPORT. HE THINKS THAT IT SHOULD INVOLVED ABOUT THREE BATTATLIONS
AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE IN THERE FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF DAYS TO
SEARCH FOR AND DESTROY STORES IN THAT AREA. HE ALSO FEELS THAT IT
WILL BE NECESSARY TO KEEP THE GENERAL RESERVE IN NORTHERN I CORPS,
AND THAT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM KHE SANH WILL BE COMPLTED ABOUT 1 MAY.
3. PRESIDENT THIEU WILL MEET WITH GENERAL LAM AND GENERAL VIEN
ON 20 MARCH TO DISCUSS THE PRACTICALITY OF THE RAID OPERATION AGAINST
MUONG NONG. GENERAL WEYAND VISITED THE AREA TODAY AND HASGONE
OVER IN DETAIL THEIR OLANS FOR FIRE SUPPORT FOR EACH PHASE OF THE
OPERATION-B -52'S, TACAIR, AND GUNSHIPS- TO BE SURE THAT IT IS A
THOROUGH AND PROFESSIONAL JOB. IT IS GENERAL WEYAND'S IMPRESSION
THAT GENERAL LAM HAS IN MIND A MORE RAPID WITHDRAWAL THAN THAT
EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT THIEU. THE DIFFICULTIES IN EXECUTION WILL
PROBABLY SLOW WHAT GENERAL LAM IS ABLE TO DO; THEREFORE IT MAY STRETCH

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
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TO THE DAY VISUALIZED BY PRESIDENT THIEU. IN ANY EVENT, THE THREE-GENERAL LAM, GENERAL VIEN AND PRESIDENT THIEU-SHOULD COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS ON THE 20TH.
4. PRESIDENT THIEU OS CONFIDENT OF
THE SUCCESS OF THE OPERATION AND HE BELIEVES THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT.
GP-4
BT
#9294
ANNOTES
STAMP THIS MESSAGE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE
PLEASE HANDLE AT NMCC MC
HRB